

Proclamation

*In Recognition of Councilmember Dennis Pocekay
January 2021 to January 2025*

WHEREAS, let it be known that Councilmember Dennis Pocekay, an accomplished physician and community activist whose tireless devotion and effective advocacy for residents from all walks of life, especially our historically marginalized and disadvantaged communities, has authentically, and with thoughtfulness, humility, and unwavering empathy and bold compassion, served the residents of the City of Petaluma for the past four years on the Petaluma City Council and as Vice Mayor in 2022; and

WHEREAS, exceptionally passionate and committed to vastly improving the City's response to homelessness by supporting increased investment by the City (now totaling approximately \$4 million annually) and by serving on the Sonoma County Homeless System of Care Leadership Council all four years of his term, and by chairing the Continuum of Care board comprising a consortium of local governments, nonprofits and homeless service providers, Dennis successfully advocated for systemic changes through integrated and inclusive policies and programs, dedicated funding opportunities, and by insisting on collective impact, early intervention, and investing in prevention measures to keep people from becoming homeless countywide; and

WHEREAS, Councilmember Pocekay, grew up in Richmond, California, and worked in his Croatian family's neighborhood grocery store until leaving for college, received an engineering degree from CalTech, attended medical school at Creighton University, and moved to Sonoma County with his wife, Dr. Donna Norquist, to begin their medical careers with Kaiser Permanente in 1982, and moved to Petaluma in 1991; and

WHEREAS, during his 27 years with Kaiser in the North Bay, Councilmember Pocekay practiced General Internal Medicine and Occupational & Environmental Medicine, and in his last 15 years of practice, he served as Chief of the Department of Occupational Medicine, and also as Physician Lead for Northern California Occupational Health and Safety Services, all the while coaching his daughter's elementary school soccer and basketball teams, and hitting fly balls to his outfielder son; and

WHEREAS, once retired from Kaiser, Councilmember Pocekay taught science and math as a substitute teacher at Casa Grande High School, taught public health to medical students at UC Davis, served on the Steering Committee of the North Bay Rapid Response Network, on the boards of Mentor Me and Petaluma People Services Center, on the City's Youth Commission, the County Stakeholders Advisory Group for Climate Action 2020, and on the Climate Action Commission Ad Hoc Committee on Equity and Climate Justice—and once elected, Dennis applied his superpowers of observation, analyses, common sense, and wit as liaisons to the Youth Commission, Climate Action Commission, Health Action Council, Airport Commission, Transit Advisory Committee, the Legislative Committee of the Sonoma County Mayors and Councilmembers, and whose pursuit for social justice, equity, and compassion has seeped into every City department and influenced every decision made by the City Council since his election in 2020; and

WHEREAS, Councilmember Dennis Pocekay, while admittedly feeling constrained by the bureaucratic process, took our City to new heights by diversifying committee and commission appointees, prioritizing renter's protections and rights and preventing unjust evictions as a top Council goal, and was instrumental in the City's implementation of police oversight including the hiring of an Independent Police Auditor and establishment of the Public Safety Advisory Committee, all which will continue to ensure responsive, transparent, and inclusive relationships between the City and our community that serve; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that I, Kevin McDonnell, Mayor of Petaluma, along with the members of the Petaluma City Council, do hereby proclaim the 16th day of December, 2024 as **DENNIS POCEKAY DAY** and extend our congratulations, endless gratitude, and appreciation for his distinguished and faithful service to City Council and the community of the City of Petaluma.

Caitlin Corley, City Clerk

Kevin McDonnell, Mayor